

REMARKS

Applicant submits this response to an Office Action mailed on September 08, 2004 (the "Office Action"). Filed concurrently herewith is a Petition for Extension of Time pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) by which applicants request a three (3) month extension of time to file a response to the Office Action. Applicants' response is thus due no later than March 8, 2005, and this response is being timely filed.

By this amendment, applicants have amended claims 14, 22, 67 and 76, and added new claims 77-80. Thus, upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-80 will be in the present application.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has noted that applicants priority claim included on the first page of the specification appeared incomplete. In response thereto, applicants have amended paragraph [0001] of the specification to include a complete identification of the priority applications to the present application.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has noted that applicants' listing of references in the specification does not constitute a proper information disclosure statement. To ensure that all prior art references are properly considered and cited in the present application, applicants submit herewith an Information Disclosure Statement and PTO Form 1449.

In the Office Action the Examiner has objected to the Abstract as being longer than the permitted 150 words. By this amendment, applicants submit a revised Abstract that complies with the length requirements as set forth in MPEP §608.01(b).

The Examiner has objected to claim 76 as being a method claim that depends from an apparatus claim. Applicants have amended claim 76 to recite its dependence from claim 61, a method claim.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-13, 15-21, 23-44 and 50-60 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-16 of U.S. Patent No. 6,622,721. In response thereto, applicants herewith submit a terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c).

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 44-50 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 19-24 of U.S. Patent No. 6,382,204. In response thereto, applicants herewith submit a terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c).

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 61-66 and 73-76 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-6 of U.S. Patent No. 6,530,371. In response thereto, applicants herewith submit a terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c).

In the Office Action, the Examiner has objected to claims 14, 22 and 67-72 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Examiner has indicated that those claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and all intervening claims. Applicants have rewritten claims 14, 22 and 67 in independent form as suggested by the Examiner.

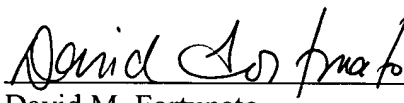
Applicants respectfully submit that this response is fully responsive to the Office Action and places the present application in condition for allowance. Specifically, applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-80 are in condition for allowance.

Applicant hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge the fees necessary in connection with this amendment, including the fees necessary in connection with the extension of time, and any other fees necessary in connection with this application, to Deposit Account Number 02-1666.

Any questions concerning this application or amendment may be directed to the undersigned agent of applicant.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: February 15, 2005

By: 
David M. Fortunato
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Reg. No. 42,548
(201) 847-6940